(b) whether the Alcatel has also proposed to try this Indian technology in its most prestigious telephone network in Paris; and

(c) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT, ATOMIC ENERGY, ELECTRONICS AND SPACE (SHRI K. R. NARAYANAN): (a) CIT-Alcatel of France has approached the Centre for Development of Telematics for detailed technical information on C-DOT 128-Port Rural Automatic Exchange (RAX) for examining the feasibility of purchasing this equipment from India.

(b) and (c) CIT-Alcatel have not indicated the proposed area of application in France for this technology.

Facilities to the US Navy patrols by Pakistan

*234. PROF. CHANDRESH P. THAKUR:

SHRI KAPIL VERMA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Pakistan is providing refueling and rest facilities to the US Navy patrols headed for the Persian Gulf from a base near Karachi; and

(b) if so, what is the reaction of Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH): (a) Government have seen such reports.

(b) The setting up of foreign bases or facilities in our neighbourhood adversely affects the security environment of the entire region. Government have made known their concerns in this regard to Pakistan and the USA.

Suggestion for setting up of a National Monsoon Management Centre

*235. SHRI MAHENDRA PRAS
DR. RATNAKAR PANDE

Will the PRIME MINISTER be plea sed to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the D rector of the International Rice Researc Institute has recently suggessted th Government should take new initiati like the establishment of a National M soon Management Centre which co stimulate action aimed at deriving c mum benefits from normal monsoons minimise the adverse impact of unfa rable weather; and

(b) if so, what are the details the and Government's decision in r thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TE NOLOGY AND THE MINISTER STATE IN THE DEPARTMEN OF OCEAN DEVELOPMEN ATOMIC ENERGY, ELECTRONICS AND SPACE (SHRI K. R. NARAYANAN): (a) The Government has received no such suggestion.

(b) In view of (a) above, the questior does not arise.

Tunnel through Rohtang Pass

*236. SHRI ANAND SHARMA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering a proposal to construct a tunnel through the Rohtang pass in Himachal Pradesh to link the snow-bound lahaul valley with the rest of the country; and

(b) if so, by when the work is proposed to be commenced on this project?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI K. C. PANT): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A feasibility study of constructing a tunnel at Rohtang has been sanctioned at an estimated cost of Rs. 82 lakhs.